

EROCIPS

Emergency Response to coastal Oil, Chemical and Inert Pollution from Shipping



Supported by the European Union
Project co-financed by the ERDF



WP.1: Pollution Threats

Task .1.2: Past Incident Review

Version: Final version

Last updated on: 16/01/07

Author: GA-MF/ Intecmar-Cetmar

Responsible: INTECMAR

Involved partners: All the Erocips partners

Approved by Steering Group on: 15/03/07



1. INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic area of the European Union has been the scene of a number of well-known shipping incidents over the last thirty years. In considering the environmental and economic costs of those incidents it is clearly important to learn lessons from them in order to prevent their repetition and to better deal with such events in the future.

Several international organizations have elaborated and maintained databases of oil spills from tankers, combined carriers and barges and used them to generate statistics on numbers and sizes of spills, and to identify causes of spills (ITOPF, NOAA, Cedre, MCA, ...). These databases usually recover all the information related to major maritime incidents. In those cases the incident is usually well documented and contains information on both the spill itself and response actions. However, it is important to recognize that major incidents are relatively rare events and in most cases incidents are small.

Maritime incidents are usually the result of a combination of actions and circumstances that will influence the impact degree. Each past incident has demonstrated the strain that can be placed on regional and local government resources and management structures as responders attempt to limit the impact caused by the pollution on the shoreline assets of a coastal area. Although damaging, each of these events has also provided those involved with experience of how to deal with an incident.

The goal of EROCIPS project is the formulation of a transferable methodology that communicates relevant information to responders and decision-makers involved in shoreline counter pollution operations following a shipping incident. In this context, the compilation of lessons learnt from past incidents constitutes a useful tool for a better preparation of local and regional administrations involved in contingency plans.

2. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this task was to gather information on maritime pollution incidents, covering major through to minor, that have impacted upon Atlantic area coastlines. Paying particular attention to the lessons learnt by the local administrations that responded to these incidents and how these can be incorporated within EROCIPS.

3. METHODOLOGY

In order to compile information about past maritime pollution incidents that have impacted upon Atlantic area coastlines, a questionnaire was prepared and EROCIPS partners involved in WP1 were invited to fill it up. The questionnaire was divided on different sections which recovered information about:

- Ship identification
- Ship features
- Brief summary of the accident
- Communications during the incident
- Pollution report (from sea)
- Pollution report (from land)
- Meteorological and hydrodynamic conditions
- The product
- Removed Pollution
- Impact description
- Countermeasures
- Administrations and other type of organizations involved in crisis management and response operations
- Claim management
- Follow-up of environmental damage
- Restoration measures
- Lessons learnt
- Costs and Compensation assessment
- References and links
- Other remarks
- Key words

A data base was established for the information on past maritime pollution incidents recovered from the different regions. That information covers major to minor incidents information.

4. COMPILED INFORMATION ON PAST INCIDENTS ON EROCIPS REGION

A summary of the number of past incidents documented by each of the countries involved on EROCIPS project is shown in table 1.

Country	W.D.	D.	P.D.	Remarks
France	42			Only major incidents reported
Portugal			144	Major, minor and local incidents
Spain	3	5	60	Mainly port incidents reported
U.K.			8	Only major incidents reported

Table1. Number of incidents reported by country. W.D.: well documented (when more than 80% of the questionnaire was completed). D.: documented (when approximately the 50% of the questionnaire was completed). P.D.: poorly documented (when less than 30% of the questionnaire was completed).

The whole cases recovered can be seen in the Excel database in the Annex 1 of this document.

Several difficulties were found in compiling the past incident information. The information was in general scarce, poorly documented and dispersed. Furthermore, no uniform format was found, so it was difficult to compare data from different organizations.

When referring to major incidents, most relevant information was already available in the oil spill databases developed by international organizations,. In relation to minor incidents, they were generally poorly documented if any. Moreover, local authorities were in some cases reluctant to provide or even to record such data.

Looking at the information recovered from each country:

- In the case of France, the institution “Le Cedre” has one of the best incidents database. It is focused mainly on major incidents. All the reported cases are very well documented and contain information on the different aspects of the incident: ship characteristics, meteorological and oceanographic data at that moment, causes of the incident, incident consequences and after spill actions
- In the case of Portugal, numerous local incidents have been reported containing information about location of the incident, quantity spilled and product spilled. Although information is scarce, , it reflects that it is at least recorded and accessible
- In the case of Galicia (Spain) it was difficult to recover local information due mainly to: a) the information is spread out in different databases (sometimes as paper format and not in electronic one) and b) Local authorities were in some cases reluctant to provide information about incidents. In this sense, very few incidents are really documented for this area
- In the case of the United Kingdom, although it is presumable that records on maritime incidents exist, they are not easily available. Only

poorly documented information about some major incidents could be compiled.

In general, it can be said that the recovered information was unbalanced between the different regions. A good database on maritime incidents is only available for France. . Nevertheless, in our opinion the obtained information is not a reliable reflect of the information that exists in the different countries. By the contrary, it reflects that such information is recovered in different formats and is quite inaccessible for the general public.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the information found and collected, it is observed that medium and minor incidents are not routinely documented in an exhaustive way by regional and local authorities. Moreover, it does not exist a uniform form to collect this information and therefore, to use it to prevent and to minimize the effect of future accidents.

Since the framework that EROCIIPS project brings to develop tools to be used by regional and local administrations for fighting against maritime pollution, some recommendations can be made:

- It is recommended to collect and to document all the relevant information about the circumstances that surround an accident. This practice can help, in a decisive way, to prevent and to minimize the effect of future accidents
- The registration of information about incidents should not be seen as a reflection of bad practices but, on the contrary, as a reflection of good practices focused on better dealing for future incidents. Moreover, it can help to value the damages and losses originated by an incident as well as to detect the existence of possible negligences and to resolve responsibilities
- The recovering of information about incidents should be carried out in a way the more uniform as possible along all the coastal regions. This uniformity will facilitate the exchange of information which is crucial for a good co-operation in the fight against the maritime accidents
- Keeping in mind that collecting information about incidents is time consuming for the staff, it is recommendable to have templates to recover information that facilitate this work to the personnel in charge. This template should contain the minimum information that is required to be able to document appropriately the accident and the circumstances that surround it. In this sense, the Annex 2 of this report presents a model of template designed according to different models that are widely used and that can be utilized for collecting incidents information. The incident report has been divided into two sections the incident report itself and the post incident report. The last section recovers information about the impact produced by the incident and the post incident management
- Finally, it is advisable to periodically analyze the information on incidents (the frequency on the basis of the number and severity of the incidents),. This analysis can bring the opportunity to take the opportune measures that help to diminish, as far as possible, the number of incidents and to minimize the effect of them.